

## Why Romans Can Change My Life, Part 2 - Romans 1:5-7 – January 9th, 2011

**Romans 1:1-4** (1) Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— (2) the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures (3) regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, (4) and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. (5) Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. (6) And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (7) To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- This is part two of a teaching titled; "Why Romans Could Change My Life." In it, we're seeing how it is that this book is so powerful.
- By way of introduction, and because it's germane to our instruction, we'll quickly look at the first three reasons in the first four verses.

### 1. It's from somebody not just anybody (Verse 1)

- Paul introduces himself first as a slave then an apostle because as a slave he's somebody sent out to reach everybody with the gospel.
- In other words, not just anybody can change my life. It will come from that somebody who's surrendered to God, and sent out by God.

### 2. It's good news not just good advice (Verse 2)

- Paul identifies his calling and purpose as the foretold good news; the Gospel of God, a term meaning; good news, your free now!"
- Good advice can't change my life, it's the Good News that can. It's the truth of the Good News of Salvation in Christ that sets me free.

### 3. It's a Person not just a principle (Verses 3-4)

- Paul describes in perfect words the perfect person of Jesus Christ; from David He's the Son of Man, by his resurrection the Son of God.
- Principles are just that, principles. They may help me to live my life, but it's only the Person of Jesus Christ Who can change my life.

### 4. It's a reality not just a theology (Verse 5)

(5) Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.

- v5 Paul says it's through Jesus that we've received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.
- Paul is making a very powerful distinction between the reality of Christianity, and the morality of a system of teaching theoretically.
- He does this by saying it's through Jesus Christ that we receive the grace to, and are called to, the obedience that comes from faith.

- I must admit that early in my Christian faith, I couldn't get my mind around this, or hands on this, because of all that's packed in this.
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for a moment as I attempt to unwrap and unpack this one verse as it relates to grace, obedience, and faith.
- In order to do that, it's vital we see the order in which Paul writes this. First, notice how that grace is received through Jesus Christ.

- Now at first glance this may seem like a firm grasp of the obvious however, upon further examination the focus on grace becomes clear.
- Let me explain; the centrality of grace is the reality of the Good News. Grace is what makes Christianity real and not just another theory.
- Let me hasten to say, that I in no way will even try to define grace. As Gayle Erwin once said; "Grace by its very nature is indefinable."

**Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.

After twenty years of shaving himself every morning, a man in a small Southern town decided he had enough. He told his wife that he intended to let the local barber shave him each day. He put on his hat and coat and went to the barber shop, which was owned by the pastor of the town's only Church. The barber's wife, Grace, was working that day, so she performed the task. Grace shaved him and sprayed him with lilac water, and sent him on his way. The next morning the man looked in the mirror, and his face was as smooth as it had been when he left the barber shop the day before. Not bad, he thought. At least I don't need to get a shave every day. The next morning, the man's face was still smooth. Two weeks later, the man was still unable to find any trace of whiskers on his face. It was more than he could take, so he returned to the barber shop. He told the barber's wife how that after two weeks his whiskers still haven't started to grow back. The expression on her face didn't even change, expecting his comment. She responded, "You were shaved by Grace. Once shaved, always shaved."

- By virtue of the entirety of the book of Romans being about grace, there's plenty of time to get more acquainted with Grace, here's why:
- One has very poignantly outlined the book of Romans, and in so doing revealed how beautifully God's Grace is just all over the place.
- Ch. 1-4: Coming under grace, Ch. 5-8: Living under grace, Ch. 9-11: The overflow of grace, Ch. 12-16: The church changed by grace

- Let's round a corner with the grace through Christ at the center, so we can see how it can change my Christian life and make it real.
- With grace in its proper place, I can now understand how it's possible for a life of obedience to become a reality and not just a theory.
- With grace at home-base, my obedience to God is now based on what I don't deserve, and not on what my disobedience does deserve.

- Here's how grace works; "it's infinitely more difficult to sin against God, when I have been the undeserving recipient of grace from God."
- Here's how "works," works; "it's infinitely more difficult living in obedience to God, when I'm the recipient of what I deserve from God."
- With "works" when I mess up, I deserve the hammer to come down, conversely with "grace" when I mess up, more grace comes down.

**Romans 5:20 NKJV** Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

- This isn't theory it's reality. God's grace doesn't just change me, it ruins me, even spoils me making it difficult for me to hurt God's heart.
- Be that as it may, this ever so wonderfully dovetails into our next reason why the book of Romans can change my life.

### **5. It's a relationship not just a religion (Verse 6)**

(6) And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

- v6 He then specifically personalizes it by telling them that it is they who are also among those called to belong to Jesus Christ.
- In other words, this is a relationship not a religion. This is you belonging to Him because of what He has already done for you.
- Religion is what man does for God, whereas Christianity is a relationship because of what God has already done for man.

- This is why our grace based relationship with Jesus Christ doesn't depend upon what I do, or don't do. It's based on what He did do.
- When I came to an understanding of this in my Christian life, it changed my life, in that I no longer had to earn God's blessing on my life.
- We are seeing this graphically portrayed in our study of the book of Numbers with Balaam and Balak who couldn't curse the Israelites.

- Sadly, when the Israelites disobeyed God and committed sexual sin against God, they brought the curse of God upon themselves.
- When I'm saved by the grace of God, because of the love from God, I will be more likely, proportionately, to be obedient to God.

John 14:21 NIV Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

### **6. It's for Gentiles not just Jews (Verses 7)**

(7) To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- v7 Paul says it's to all in Rome because they're loved by God, called to be saints, and are the recipients of Grace and peace from God.
- Notice it's grace and peace and not peace and grace. Why? You can't know the peace of God unless you first know the grace of God.
- It's important to understand that Paul is greeting them in the Greek way and not just the Jewish way. To the Jews, it's always shalom.
- However, to the Greeks it's "Charis" which means grace. The question is, why does Paul combine the Gentile and Jewish greeting?

- Here's what I'm thinking; the "all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints," are both Jews and Gentiles alike.
- Think about the enormity of this; if the Gospel was just to the Jews, and not the Gentiles, then it really wouldn't be the "Good News."
- What makes the Good News, the Good News is that it's to all, Jew and Gentile alike. We are all loved by God and called to be saints.